


REMARKS

The purpose of this preliminary amendment is to clarify the application as originally filed and to eliminate multiple dependent claims to reduce costs.

Favorable consideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: March 12, 2002

By: 
Mark D. Elchuk
Reg. No. 33,686

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

ATTACHMENT FOR SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 1, as follows:

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates to a string trimmer₁ and in particular to a mechanism for shielding plants from the cutting path swept out by the rotating cutting line of a [the] string trimmer.

cutting line is severed when impacted by the cutting line.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 8, as follows:

[0035] Referring to Figure 1, a string trimmer [(10)] 10 comprises an elongate shaft [(13)] 13, a rear handle [(11)] 11 attached to one end of the elongate shaft [(13)] 13, an electrical trigger switch [(12)] 12 located below the rear handle [(11)] 11, a front support handle [(14)] 14 attached part way along the elongate shaft [(13)] 13, an electrical cable [(15)] 15 capable of carrying electrical current and entering the elongate shaft [(13)] 13 at a location below the rear handle [(11)] 11, a motor housing [(16)] 16 attached to the other end of the elongate shaft [(13)] 13 in which is mounted an electric motor (not shown), a semi-circular protection guard [(17)] 17 attached to the motor housing [(16)] 16 having a semi-circular edge [(174)] 174, a cutting head [(18)] 18 rotatingly driven by the electric motor, a cutting line [(19)] 19 which extends from the cutting head [(18)] 18, and a plant protector [(20)] 20 pivotally attached to the protection guard [(17)] 17 at two pivot points [(211;212)] 211, 212 in symmetrical fashion.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 20, as follows:

[0036] When operating the string trimmer [(10)] 10 the user stands in an upright position, holding the weight of the string trimmer [(10)] 10 by the rear handle [(11)] 11 and directing the cutting head with the front support handle [(14)] 14, the elongate shaft [(13)] 13 extending downwardly from the rear handle [(11)] 11 towards the motor housing [(16)] 16 and the ground. The cutting head [(18)] 18 is located in close proximity to, but clear of, the ground and is rotatably driven by the electric motor when the electric motor is energised by the user. Electrical current supplied by the electrical cable [(15)] 15 is supplied to the electric motor via the electrical switch [(12)] 12, the electrical switch [(12)] 12 connecting or disconnecting the electrical supply to the electric motor when operated by the user. When connected to the electrical current supply the electric motor is energised and rotatably drives the cutting head [(18)] 18 and the cutting line [(19)] 19. Conversely, disconnection of the electrical current supply de-energises the electric motor which results in the rotation of the cutting head [(18)] 18 and cutting line [(19)] 19 ceasing. The cutting line [(19)] 19 is a strong elongate filament, like for example, plastic wire, which extends radially from the cutting head [(18)] 18. When the cutting head [(18)] 18 is rotatably driven by the electric motor, the cutting line [(19)] 19 turns with the cutting head 18 about the same axis and sweep at a circular path cutting any soft vegetation, for example grass, which enters the path swept out by the rotating cutting line [(19)] 19.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 7, as follows:

[0037] The protection guard [(17)] 17 is part circular in shape and is adapted to surround part of the path swept out by the line on the side of the string trimmer [(10)] 10 where the user normally stands during operation. By surrounding the cutting path the protection guard [(17)] 17 prevents the user from accidentally placing their foot within the path of the rotating cutting line [(19)] 19. The part of the path swept out by the cutting line on the other side of the motor housing [(16)] 16 is exposed so that any grass or soft vegetation falling within the path will be cut.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 15, as follows:

[0038] The plant protector [(20)] 20 is mounted so that it pivots about an axis which is perpendicular to the axis of rotation of the cutting head [(18)] 18 when it is in its flat cutting position as shown in Fig 2 and also when it is in its vertical edge cutting position as shown in Fig 4.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 20, as follows:

[0039] The plant protector [(20)] 20 is able to be pivoted from the first position (not shown) where it is adjacent the elongate shaft [(13)] 13 located just forward of the elongate shaft [(13)] 13 through an angle of over 270° first to a position forward of the string trimmer (see Fig 3) to a position below the string trimmer (not shown), to a position rearward of the string trimmer (see Fig 2) and to a second position adjacent the

elongate shaft [(13)] 13, however, now being located just to the rear of the elongate shaft [(13)] 13 (not shown).

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 27, as follows:

[0040] Referring to Figure 2, the plant protector [(20)] 20 is made of transparent plastics material and comprises, a body [(207)] 207, a first elongate side member [(241)] 241, and a second symmetrical elongate side member [(242)] 242. The first side member [(241)] 241 is located on one side of the body [(207)] 207 and extends from the body [(207)] 207 to the first pivot point [(211)] 211. The second side member [(242)] 242 is located on the other side of the body [(207)] 207 and extends from the body [(207)] 207 to the second pivot point [(212)] 212 in symmetrical fashion to the first side member [(241)] 241.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 4, as follows:

[0041] The first [(241)] 241 and second [(242)] 242 side members each have a hexagonal collar [(201)] 201 located at the end of the side member away from the body [(207)] 207 as shown in Figure 6. The hexagonal collar [(201)] 201 of the first [(241)] 241 and second [(242)] 242 side members form part of the first [(211)] 211 and second [(212)] 212 pivot points respectively. The body [(207)] 207 is similar in shape to a motor cycle crash helmet visor. The body [(207)] 207 has a first edge [(208)] 208, and a second edge [(209)] 209, each edge describing an arc. The radius of the spherical section of the body [(207)] 207 is sufficiently greater than the outer radius of the

protection guard [(17)] 17 so that the plant protector [(20)] 20 can rotate about the pivot points [(211;212)] 211, 212 through its full range of pivotal movement without making contact with the protection guard [(17)] 17 as best shown in Figure 2. The first [(211)] 211 and second [(212)] 212 pivot points act together as both pivotal support and latch mechanism for the plant protector [(20)] 20. The pivot points [(211;212)] 211,212 are capable of releasably latching the plant protector [(20)] 20 in up to six different pre-determined pivotal stationary positions, or allowing rotational movement of the plant protector [(20)] 20 in relation to the guard [(17)] 17 when urged by the user. In particular, the pivot points [(211;212)] 211,212 are formed so that three of the six stationary positions can hold the plant protector in either a 'storage' (Figure 2), a 'trimming' (Figure 3) or an 'edge cutting' (Figure 4) position.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 26, as follows:

[0043] Figure 2 shows the plant protector [(20)] 20 in the "storage" position. The body [(207)] 207 of the plant protector [(20)] 20 is located behind the guard [(17)] 17. In the storage position the plant protector [(20)] 20 surrounds part of the rear outer surface of the protection guard [(17)] 17, the protection guard [(17)] 17 surrounding approximately half the circular path swept out by the rotating cutting line [(19)] 19. The plant protector [(20)] 20 is not in use when located in the storage position.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 1, as follows:

[0044] Figure 3 shows the plant protector [(20)] 20 in the "trimming" position where the plant protector projects forward of the string trimmer. The body [(207)] 207

of the plant protector [(20)] 20 is located at the front of the motor housing [(16)] 16 and projects forward. The second edge [(209)] 209, as viewed from the side in Figure 3, is located in a plane X-X, the plane X-X being substantially parallel to the ground and being the closest part of the plant protector [(20)] 20 to the rotating cutting line [(19)] 19. The path swept out by the rotating cutting line [(19)] 19 is also parallel to the ground and is located just beneath the plant protector [(20)] 20. The rotating cutting line [(19)] 19 is located closer to the ground than the edge [(209)] 209 in order to cut low-level vegetation like, for example, grass while other overhanging plants are pushed away by the body [(207)] 207 of the plant protector [(20)] 20 and therefore protected from the rotating cutting line [(19)] 19.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 13, as follows:

[0045] Figure 4 shows the plant protector [(20)] 20 in the “edge cutting” position the plant protector is still projecting forward of the string trimmer. The cutting head [(18)] 18 of the string trimmer [(10)] 10 is orientated so that the path swept out by the rotating cutting line [(19)] 19 is vertical. When the path swept out by the rotating cutting line [(19)] 19 is vertical, the string trimmer can be used to cut grass overhanging the vertical edge of a grass lawn adjoining a flower bed. The motor housing [(16)] 16 is located on the grass lawn side of the path swept out by the rotating cutting line [(19)] 19, and the plant protector [(20)] 20 is located on the opposite side of the path swept above the flower bed. The first edge [(208)] 208, as viewed from the side in Figure 4, is located within a plane Y-Y, the plane Y-Y being parallel to the ground and being perpendicular to the path swept out by the rotating cutting line [(19)] 19. In the “edge

cutting" position the plant protector [(17)] 17 acts as a shield surrounding part of the upper half of the path swept out by the rotating cutting line [(19)] 19 thereby protecting those plants and flowers rooted in the flower bed and overhanging the vertical edge of the lawn from the rotating cutting line [(19)] 19.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 28, as follows:

[0046] The first [(211)] 211 and second [(212)] 212 pivot points are located on opposite sides of the guard [(17)] 17 and are constructed in the same manner. A description of the construction of the plant protector of the first pivot point [(211)] 211 is equally applicable to the construction of the second pivot point [(212)] 212. The construction of the first pivot point [(211)] 211 will now be described with reference to Figures 5 to 9.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 1, as follows:

[0047] The pivot point [(211)] 211 comprises:

- e) a raised section [(171)] 171 moulded into the protection guard [(17)] 17, the raised section [(171)] 171 comprising an outer circular ridge [(172)] 172, a central hub [(173)] 173 having a threaded aperture [(174)] 174, and three shoulders [(175)] 175 extending radially in from the circular ridge [(172)] 172 to the central hub [(173)] 173 (see Figure 9);
- f) a hexagonal collar [(201)] 201 moulded into the plant protector [(20)] 20 having a circular internal aperture [(203)] 203, the hexagonal collar [(201)] 201 having six outer flats [(202)] 202 inter-posed by six 'v'-shaped troughs [(204)] 204, the

flats [(202)] 202 each comprising a mid-point [(205)] 205 and two extreme-ends [(206)] 206, an extreme-end [(206)] 206 being formed at the transitional point between a flat [(202)] 202 and its adjacent trough [(204)] 204 (see Figure 6);

- g) a circular cap [(22)] 22 made of resilient material, comprising a perimeter wall [(227)] 227 and three tongues [(221)] 221, wherein the three tongues [(221)] 221 form part of the perimeter wall [(22)] 22, each of which is capable of resilient deformation and each one has a protrusion [(222)] 222. The circular cap [(22)] 22 further comprises a central collar [(223)] 223 forming an aperture [(224)] 224 and an annular raised portion [(225)] 225 located in the annular space between the collar [(223)] 223 and the perimeter wall [(227)] 227. The annular raised portion [(225)] 225 has three grooves [(226)] 226 on its outer surface. Each of the three grooves [(226)] 226 is adapted to simultaneously receive one of the three shoulders [(175)] 175 when the pivot point [(211)] 211 is assembled (see Figure 5);
- h) a threaded bolt [(23)] 23 forming the axis of rotation [(231)] 231 of the pivot point [(211)] 211.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 23, as follows:

[0048] Assembly of the pivot point [(211)] 211 is a three stage process:

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 24, as follows:

[0049] Firstly unite the cap [(22)] 22 and the plant protector [(20)] 20 so that the raised portion [(225)] 225 of the cap [(22)] 22 is received by the aperture [(203)] 203 on

the plant protector [(20)] 20 (as shown by Figure 5) and the hexagonal collar [(201)] 201 is received by the annular trough located between the annular raised portion [(225)] 225 and the perimeter wall [(227)] 227 of the cap [(22)] 22 (as shown in Figures 5 and 6), such that each protrusion [(222)] 222 makes contact with the mid-point [(205)] 205 of one of the flats [(202)] 202 without resilient deformation of the tongue [(221)] 221.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 31, as follows:

[0050] Secondly, unite both the cap [(22)] 22 and the plant protector [(20)] 20 with the guard [(17)] 17 so that the hub [(173)] 173 of the guard [(17)] 17 is received by the aperture [(224)] 224 of the cap and the raised portion [(225)] 225 engages with the three shoulders [(175)] 175, such that each shoulder [(175)] 175 is received by one of the three grooves [(226)] 226 in the raised portion [(225)] 225 thereby preventing rotational movement of the cap [(22)] 22 relative to the plant protector [(20)] 20.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 11, line 5, as follows:

[0051] Thirdly, securely fix the cap [(22)] 22 to the guard [(17)] 17 with the bolt [(23)] 23 which engages with threaded aperture [(174)] 174 of the guard [(17)] 17.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 11, line 8, as follows:

[0052] The pivot points [(211;212)] 221,212, once assembled, allow rotational movement of the plant protector [(20)] 20 relative to the guard [(17)] 17 and the cap [(22)] 22, subject to interaction between the protrusions [(222)] 222 on the tongues [(221)] 221 and the troughs [(204)] 204. The six flats [(202)] 202 and six troughs [(204)]

204 of the hexagonal collar [(201)] 201 form part of, and move with, the plant protector [(20)] 20. Each flat [(202)] 202 is arranged so that the distance between its mid-point [(205)] 205 and the axis of rotation [(231)] 231 is smaller than the distance between one of its extreme ends [(206)] 206 and the axis of rotation [(231)] 231. When a protrusion [(222)] 222 makes contact at the mid-point [(205)] 205 of an adjacent flat [(202)] 202 the tongue [(221)] 221 on which is mounted that protrusion is not deformed. However, should a protrusion [(222)] 222 slide towards an extreme end [(206)] 206 of that same flat [(202)] 202, due to rotation of the plant protector [(20)] 20 relative to the guard [(17)] 17 and the cap [(22)] 22, then the protrusion [(222)] 222 is pushed radially outwards and away from the axis of rotation [(231)] 231 due to contact with the flat [(202)] 202 and, resiliently deforms its tongue [(221)] 221. The resilient nature of the tongue [(221)] 221 resists the sliding of the protrusion [(222)] 222 from the mid-point [(205)] 205 to the extreme-end [(206)] 206.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 11, line 23, as follows:

[0053] Moving the protrusion [(222)] 222 further from the mid-point [(205)] 205 and beyond the extreme-end [(206)] 206 engages the protrusion [(222)] 222 with a 'v'-shaped trough [(204)] 204. The distance between the bottom of the trough [(204)] 204 and the axis of rotation [(231)] 231 is smaller than the distance between the extreme-end [(206)] 206 and the axis of rotation [(231)] 231, therefore the deformation of the tongue [(221)] 221 is reduced once the protrusion [(222)] 222 passes the extreme-end [(206)] 206 and engages with the trough [(204)] 204. Once the protrusion [(222)] 222 is

engaged with the trough [(204)] 204 the resilient nature of its tongue [(221)] 221 resists movement of the protrusion [(222)] 222 from the trough [(204)] 204.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 12, line 1, as follows:

[0054] The protrusions [(222)] 222, the flats [(202)] 202 and the troughs [(204)] 204 are all mutually aligned so that if one protrusion [(222)] 222 is engaged with a trough [(204)] 204 then each of the other two protrusions [(222)] 222 are simultaneously engaged with the other troughs [(204)] 204. Equally, if one protrusion [(222)] 222 is located at the mid-point [(205)] 205 of a flat [(202)] 202 then each of the other protrusions [(222)] 222 is simultaneously located at the mid-point [(205)] 205 of a flat [(202)] 202, and so on. The first [(211)] 211 and second [(212)] 212 pivot points resist relative rotational movement between the guard [(17)] 17 and the plant protector [(20)] 20 because this involves the protrusions [(222)] 222 moving from one trough [(204)] 204 to engage with another trough [(204)] 204.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 12, line 11, as follows:

[0055] This acts as a latch mechanism, only allowing rotational movement of the protrusions [(222)] 222 between two troughs [(204)] 204 when a sufficient rotational force exerted by the user is great enough to overcome the resilient force of the tongues [(221)] 221. Conversely, the effect of gravity upon the mass of the plant protector [(20)] 20 does not exert a great enough rotational force about the axis of rotation [(231)] 231 to overcome the resilient force of the tongues [(221)] 221 and cause rotational movement of the protrusions [(222)] 222 between two troughs [(204)] 204. Therefore

the first [(211)] 211 and second [(212)] 212 pivot points hold the plant protector [(20)] 20 stationary in relation to the protection guard [(17)] 17 in any one of six positions provided each protrusion [(222)] 222 is engaged with a trough [(204)] 204. These six positions are pre-determined by the orientation of six troughs [(204)] 204 relative to the plant protector [(20)] 20.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 12, line 23, as follows:

[0056] During its life, a string trimmer risks being stored for a long time with the plant protector [(20)] 20 positioned relative to the protection guard [(17)] 17 in such a way that the protrusions [(222)] 222 are not engaged with a trough [(204)] 204. In such a case, each protrusion [(222)] 222 must instead be located somewhere upon the surface of an adjacent flat [(202)] 202. This location may be the extreme end [(206)] 206 of the flat [(202)] 202 causing continual deformation of the tongue [(221)] 221. Over time, continual deformation of the resilient material forming the tongues [(221)] 221 may result in plastic deformation of the tongues [(221)] 221. Once plastically deformed, the tongues [(221)] 221 lose their resilience and are unable to fully engage their protrusions [(222)] 222 with the troughs [(204)] 204. Once this has happened, the holding force of first [(211)] 211 and second [(212)] 212 pivot points is reduced. In cases of extreme deformation the effect of gravity upon the mass of the plant protector [(20)] 20 can be sufficient to exert a great enough rotational force about the axis of rotation [(231)] 231 to overcome the what remains of resilient force of the tongues [(221)] 221.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 13 line 5, as follows:

[0057] In this embodiment such a risk is reduced due to the inclusion of the flats [(202)] 202 between the troughs [(204)] 204. If each protrusion [(222)] 222 is located at one extreme end [(206)] 206 of the flat [(202)] 202 then the protrusion [(222)] 222 and hence the tongue tends to slide along the surface from the extreme end [(206)] 206 to the mid-point [(202)] 202 reducing distance between the axis of rotation [(231)] 231 and protrusion. The tongue [(221)] 221 is resiliently deformed when its protrusion [(222)] 222 is located at one extreme end, [(222)] 222 is located either at the mid-point [(202)] 202 or is engaged with one of the troughs [(204)] 204. If a string trimmer is stored with each protrusion [(222)] 222 located at one extreme end [(206)] 206 then, the resilient nature of the tongue [(221)] 221 urges its protrusion [(222)] 222 to slide towards the mid-point [(205)] 205 of the same flat [(202)] 202 where the tongue [(221)] 221 is no longer deformed. The use of flats [(202)] 202 between troughs [(204)] 204 provides a means of reducing the likelihood that the tongues [(221)] 221 do not become plastically deformed. Therefore, the performance of the latching mechanism is less likely to deteriorate over time.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 13, line 20, as follows:

[0058] Though Figure 3 shows the plant protector [(20)] 20 located above the cutting line [(19)] 19, the plant protector can be pivoted downwardly so that it surrounds the front half of the path swept out by the cutting line. When in this position, the protrusions [(222)] 222 are engaged with the flats [(202)] 202.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 13, line 31, as follows:

[0061] The design of the second embodiment of the present invention is the same as that of the first embodiment except that the hexagonal collar [(201)] 201 on the plant protector of the first embodiment of the invention has been replaced by a circular collar [(300)] 300 as shown in Figure 11. The circular collar [(300)] 300 comprises six flats [(302)] 302 which are curved, each flat [(302)] 302 having a radius of curvature about the axis [(304)] 304 which passes through the [centre] center of the collar 300 and which is the same as the other flats [(302)] 302. Between each pair of flats [(302)] 302 is located a trough [(204)] 204, there being six troughs in total.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 14, line 8, as follows:

[0062] The second embodiment of the present invention works in the same manner as the first embodiment. When the protrusion [(222)] 222 on the tongue [(221)] 221 of the cap [(22)] 22 is rotated from a position where it is engaged with a trough [(204)] 204 to a position where it engages with a flat [(302)] 302, the tongue resiliently deforms outwardly. However as the protrusion continues to rotate relative to the circular collar [(300)] 300 it slides along the surface of the flat [(302)] 302 of the circular collar [(300)] 300, the amount of deformation of the tongue [(221)] 221 remains constant as it slides along the flat [(302)] 302 until it reaches the next trough where it engages with the trough to latch the pivot mechanism and hence the plant protector into a latched position.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 14, line 18, as follows:

[0063] The orientation of the troughs [(204)] 204 about the axis [(304)] 304 has been varied in the second embodiment to that of the first so that when the plant protector is in a forward projecting position in front of the cutting head [(18)] 18 and the protrusions [(222)] 222 are engaged with the troughs [(204)] 204, it surrounds the front edge of the path swept out by the cutting line [(19)] 19 when it rotates as shown in Figure 10.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 14, line 24, as follows:

[0064] The design of the third embodiment of the present invention will be described with reference to Figure 12 and is the same as that of the first except for the fact that the plant protector is mounted at its pivot points on the inside of the wall of the protector guard [(17)] 17. Except for the plant protector [(400)] 400 the same reference numbers have been used in Figure 12 as those used to describe the first embodiment. The guard is part circular in shape and is adapted to surround part of the rear of the path swept out by the rotating cutting line. The pivot points (not shown) are constructed in the same manner as those described in the first embodiment, the raised sector being moulded into the guard facing inwardly towards the cutting head [(18)] 18, the hexagonal collar on the plant protector and the cap being located within the space surrounded by the guard.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 15, line 4, as follows:

[0065] The radius of the plant protector [(400)] 400 is less than that of the wall of the guard but greater than that of the path swept out by the rotating cutting line.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 15, line 13, as follows:

[0068] It will be obvious to a person skilled in the art to reduce the width of the plant protector sufficient so that it is entirely located within the space surrounded by the guard when located in the "storage position".

ATTACHMENT FOR CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Please amend the claims in accordance with the following rewritten claims in clean form. Applicant includes herewith an Attachment for Claim Amendments showing a marked up version of each amended claim.

1. (Amended) A string trimmer comprising:
an elongate shaft;
a cutting head rotatably mounted on one end of the elongate shaft;
at least one cutting member which extends from the cutting head; [and]
a barrier which is capable of being used by an operator to move vegetation away from a path swept out by the cutting member when it rotates, [characterized] characterised in that the barrier is pivotally mounted about a single pivot axis on the string trimmer and, when the cutting head is rotating in a flat position, is capable of pivoting from a position above the path swept out by the cutting member to a position below the path swept out by the cutting member without passing through the path swept out by the cutting member.

2. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed in claim 1, wherein the axis of pivot is substantially perpendicular to [the] an axis of rotation of the cutting head when the cutting head is in a flat cutting position

3. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed in [either of the claims 1 or 2] claim 1, wherein the axis of pivot of the [band] barrier is substantially perpendicular to

the axis of rotation of the cutting head when the cutting head is in a vertical edge cutting position.

4. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed in claim 1, [any one of the previous claims] wherein the barrier is capable of pivoting through at least 270°.

5. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed in claim 1, [any one of the previous claims] wherein the barrier is [capable of pivoting] able to pivot from a first position where it is located on one side of the elongate shaft to a second position where it is located on the other side of the elongate shaft.

6. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed in claim 1, [any one of the previous claims] wherein the barrier has suitable dimensions so that it is capable of surrounding [the] an edge of the path swept out by the cutting member when it is rotating.

7. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed in claim 1, [any one of the previous claims] wherein the barrier is capable of pivoting to a position wherein it projects forward of the string trimmer.

8. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed in claim 1, [any one of the previous claims] wherein the barrier is capable of pivoting to a position where it projects downwardly from the string trimmer.

9. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed in claim 1, [any one of the previous claims] wherein the barrier is capable of pivoting to a positioning in which it projects rearward from the string trimmer.

10. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed in claim 1 [any one of the previous claims] wherein there is further provided a guard, the barrier being capable of pivoting to a position where it surrounds[the] a rear of the guard.

11. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed in claim 10, wherein the barrier is pivotally mounted on the guard.

12. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed [on any one of claims 1 to 9] in claim 1, wherein there is further provided a guard, the barrier being capable of pivoting to a position where the guard surrounds at least part or all of the barrier.

13. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed in claim 1, [any one of the previous claims] wherein the barrier includes opposite end portions and is pivotally mounted on the string trimmer at [each end of] its [ends] said opposite end portions by pivot mechanisms.

14. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed in claim 1, [any one of the previous claims] wherein the barrier can be latched in a plurality of predetermined angular positions.

15. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed in claim 14₁ wherein the barrier can be latched in six predetermined angular positions.

16. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed in [any one of the previous claims] claim 1, wherein the barrier is in the form of a band which is pivotally mounted at each of its ends.

17. (Amended) A string trimmer as claimed in claim 16₁ where the band curves from one pivot point around to the other pivot point.

18. (Amended) A barrier for use on a string trimmer₁ comprising:
an elongate shaft;
a cutting head rotatably mounted on one end of the elongate shaft;
at least one cutting member which extends from the cutting head;
the barrier [being capable of] being used by an operator to move vegetation away from a path swept out by the cutting member when it rotates₁ [characterised in that]

the barrier being [is capable of being] pivotally mounted on said [a] string trimmer about a single axis in a manner where it can pivot from a first position above a

path swept out by the [a] cutting member to a position where it is below a path swept out by the [a] cutting member without passing through the path swept out by the cutting member when the cutting head is rotating in a flat cutting position.

19. (Amended) A barrier as claimed in claim 16, wherein the barrier is [capable of being] pivotally mounted on a guard of the [a] string trimmer.

20. (Amended) A barrier as claimed in [either of claims 17 or 18] claim 17, wherein the barrier is [capable of being] pivotally mounted on the [a] string trimmer at each of its ends [of pivot mechanisms].

21. (Amended) A barrier as claimed in [any one of claims 17 to 19] claim 17, wherein the barrier is [capable of being] mounted on the [a] string trimmer in such a manner that it can be latched in a plurality of angular positions in relation to the string trimmer.

22. (Amended) A barrier is claimed in [any one of claims 18 to 21] claim 18, wherein the barrier [is] comprises a band [capable of being] pivotally mounted at each of its ends to a guard of the string trimmer.

23. (Amended) A barrier as claimed in claim 22, wherein the band is pivotally coupled at first and second pivot points and wherein the band curves from the first pivot point to the second pivot point.